

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 303548

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SUBJECT: MORNING SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT REPORTS

1. SOUTH ARABIA

A. HAMDI RECONCILED WITH TRIBAL STRONGMAN IN YEMEN

YEMENI FOREIGN MINISTER ASNAJ HAS TOLD AMBASSADOR SCOTES
THAT YEMEN'S INTERNAL SITUATION HAS IMPROVED MARKEDLY FOL-
LOWING PRESIDENT HAMDI'S TRIP TO RIYADH:

--HAMDI WAS ACCOMPANIED BY TRIBAL LEADER SHEIKH AHMAR,
WHO HAD BEEN TRYING TO RALLY SUPPORT AMONG THE NOR-
THERN TRIBES AGAINST THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT. A RECON-
CILIATION BETWEEN THE TWO APPARENTLY OCCURRED IN
RIYADH, FOLLOWING "CLEAR AND UNEQUIVOCAL" DECLARATIONS
OF SUPPORT FOR HAMDI FROM KING KHALID AND PRINCES
FAHD, SULTAN, AND ABDULLAH.

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PAGE 02 STATE 303548

EMBASSY COMMENT: ALTHOUGH ASNAJ IS AN URBAN POLITICIAN, HE RECOGNIZES THE NEED TO BRING YEMEN'S TRADITIONAL ELEMENTS INTO THE DECISION MAKING PROCESS AND, AS THE BEST WAY TO SATISFY TRIBAL LEADERS, FAVORS THE FORMATION OF A LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL HEADED BY AHMAR.

B. EVERYTHING'S COMING UP ROSES IN SAUDI-YAR RELATIONS

IN SEPARATE CONVERSATIONS WITH ASNAJ AND HAMDI REGARDING PRESIDENT HAMDI'S TRIP TO RIYADH, AMBASSADOR SCOTES LEARNED THAT:

--SAUDI-YAR RELATIONS ARE NOW "COMPLETELY SATISFACTORY" AND THE MINI-CRISIS IS OVER. THE SAUDIS HAVE MADE FIRM COMMITMENTS ON ARMS SUPPLY AND BUDGET SUPPORT MATTERS, AND HAVE EXPRESSED COMPLETE CONFIDENCE IN THE HAMDI GOVERNMENT.

--A SPECIAL SAUDI REPRESENTATIVE IS DUE IN SANA SHORTLY BRINGING FOR SIGNATURE SPECIFIC PROPOSALS FOR THE MODERNIZATION OF THE YEMENI ARMY.

BOTH HAMDI AND ASNAJ EXPRESSED GREAT APPRECIATION FOR THE "IMPORTANT ROLE" PLAYED BY THE US IN EFFECTING THE RECONCILIATION.

SCOTES NOTES THAT IT IS STILL UNCLEAR WHAT THE SAUDI POSITION IS ON THE SOVIET ARMS PROPOSALS.

--ASNAJ SAID THAT THUS FAR THE SOVIETS HAVE ONLY AGREED TO SUPPLY ARMS CURRENTLY IN THE YEMENI INVENTORY. NEW WEAPONS SYSTEMS WERE PROMISED ONLY IF HAMDI AGREED TO GO TO MOSCOW TO ACCEPT THEM. ASNAJ PROFESSED NOT TO KNOW IF THE SAUDIS HAVE ASKED HAMDI TO REJECT EITHER STAGE.

--HAMDI SAID HE HAD LEFT IT UP TO THE SAUDIS TO GUIDE HIM ON THE SOVIET PROPOSALS, BUT DID NOT ELABORATE.

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PAGE 03 STATE 303548

C. AGITATION IN OMAN AND SOUTH YEMEN

OMAN'S SULTAN QABOOS IS ALARMED OVER WHAT HE SEES AS A SOUTH YEMENI MILITARY BUILDUP IN PREPARATION FOR AN ATTACK ON HIS COUNTRY. QABOOS CITES AN INCREASE OF SOVIET MILITARY FLIGHTS TO ADEN AND THE PRESENCE OF CUBAN AND SOVIET MILITARY ADVISERS ALONG THE DHOFAR BORDER. THE BRITISH AMBASSADOR TOLD AMBASSADOR WOLLE, HOWEVER, THAT THE BRITISH

VIEW THE RECENT PDRY MILITARY MANEUVERS AS DEFENSIVE IN NATURE.

MEANWHILE, MINISTER ASNAJ TOLD AMBASSADOR SCOTES THAT HE HAS RECEIVED REPORTS OF A DETERIORATING POLITICAL SITUATION IN SOUTH YEMEN WITH BOMB EXPLOSIONS IN TWO CITIES AND THE

KILLING OF SEVERAL STUDENTS ATTEMPTING TO FLEE TO NORTH YEMEN. ASNAJ SPECULATED THAT THE RECENT REVERSALS SUFFERED BY THE PDRY-BACKED DHOFAR REBELS IS CAUSING DISSATISFACTION IN ADEN ITSELF. (CONFIDENTIAL) SANA 3619, 3621, 3634 AND 3618 AND MUSCAT 1440, 12/28.) ROBINSON

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